DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 070 RC 020 770

TITLE	Lifelong Learning and Leadership. IDRA Focus.
INSTITUTION	Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, Tex.
REPORT NO	ISSN-1069-5672
PUB DATE	Sep 96
NOTE	14p.; Photographs will not reproduce adequately.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	IDRA Newsletter; v23 n8 Sep 1996
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Adult Literacy; Bilingual Education; Elementary Secondary Education; Leadership; Literacy Education; Mass Media Effects; *Negative Attitudes; *Outreach Programs; *Parent Conferences; Parent Empowerment; *Parent Participation; Publicity; Public Relations; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	*Literacy Campaigns; Texas; *Two Way Bilingual Education

ABSTRACT

This theme issue focuses on programs that promote lifelong learning through literacy education, parent empowerment, or parent leadership training. "Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations: Porque Significa Tanto" (Christie L. Goodman) describes a Texas outreach project that focuses on raising public awareness about adult education and literacy, outlines four steps in outreach (or public relations), discusses the power of mass media messages, and summarizes negative "deficit" messages to avoid in literacy outreach. "Keeping the Faith: Valuing Parents" (Aurelio M. Montemayor) suggests the importance of holding high expectations for parents' commitment to their children's education, and describes three cases in which educators' actions revealed the negative assumptions they (perhaps unconsciously) held toward bilingual parents. In "Families United for Education: Conversations with Parents and Friends," participants at an educational conference organized by parents for parents discuss what they had learned in the leadership development process. A sidebar, "Mobilization for Equity Highlights" (Linda Ocasio), briefly describes the parent leadership conference. An article unrelated to the issue's theme, "Two-Way Bilingual Education: A Positive Way To 'Cry Woof'" (Frank Gonzalez), describes two-way bilingual programs and discusses the value of bilingualism. (SV)

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

IDRA Focus:
Lifelong Learning and Leadership

ISSN 1069-5672 *Volume XXIII, No. 8 September 1996*

ED 401 070

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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ISSN 1068-9672 Volume XXIII, No. 8 September 1996

Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations: Porque Significa Tanto

Christie L. Goodman, APR

IDRA is an independent nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to improving educational opportunity. Through research, materials development, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and information dissemination, we're helping to create schools that work for all children.

There's a lot of learning going on inside and outside of schools. Unlike school children, adults are more in a position to seek out their own learning. For example, someone planning to purchase a television will look for information about televisions: how much do they cost, which brands have a good picture, which ones are less likely to break down. Someone who is diagnosed with cancer will look for information about cancer and treatment. Someone starting a business will look for information about a particular type of business and about details like what forms have to be filled out.

In the past, individuals and companies with new information would decide when to share it, how much to share, and who to share it with (and who *not* to share it with). But today, for various reasons, people are not willing to wait for someone else to decide what information they should have. We want the information we consider valuable, and we want it *when* we want it.

This is creating an enormous demand. As a result, more information has been produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000 years (Trout and Rivkin, 1995). There is more information in one issue of the *New York Times* than people in previous centuries were exposed to their entire lives (Jolley, 1995). In 1975, there were 300 on-line data bases. Now you can engulf yourself in 7,900 data bases with billions of bits of information (Trout and Rivkin, 1995).

Information for Literacy

An example of this demand is information about literacy and literacy providers. When a person decides to sign up for a literacy class and is able to spend the time it requires, he or she wants to know what classes are available and where they are held. Similarly, a person interested in volunteering or supporting literacy efforts wants to know what is needed and who to contact.

IDRA's *Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations* project was created for this reason. It is a special project funded by the Texas Education Agency that focuses on adult education and literacy in Texas. The goal is to create awareness about the need for literacy and to generate community support for literacy initiatives.

Central to the project is the creation of a prototype for a statewide public information campaign and the training of literacy center personnel in effective outreach. IDRA has developed a brochure and public service announcements (PSAs) for television and radio that will be used throughout the state. The materials focus on the theme: Do it...Support it...Reading. Because it means so much [*Lee, Hazlo, Apoyalo, Porque significa tanto*]. To assist in the training of literacy provider personnel, IDRA has developed a "how-to" guide that has been distributed to state-funded literacy projects in Texas.

In developing the campaign prototype, IDRA followed the same process that is outlined in the outreach guide. This process involves the four steps of outreach (or public relations) which are: fact finding, planning, communicating and evaluating.

Fact finding – analyze the situation, state the problem(s) to be overcome. IDRA contacted more than 500 literacy projects, distributed and tabulated written surveys,

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The Intercultural Development Research Association *(IDRA)* is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity. The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, copyright ©1996) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

Publication offices:
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190
Tel. 210/684-8180
Fax 210/684-5389
IDRA World Wide Web site:
http://www.txdirect.net/users/idra
IDRA E-mail Address:
idra@txdirect.net

Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.
IDRA Executive Director
Newsletter Executive Editor

Christie L. Goodman, APR
IDRA Communications Manager
Newsletter Production Editor

Sarah H. Aleman
IDRA Data Entry Clerk
Newsletter Typesetter

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Adult Literacy Outreach *- continued from page 1*

and conducted 14 focus group interviews throughout the state. We listened to descriptions about who is and who is not participating in literacy activities and why.

Planning – put on paper the goals, strategies, assignments, time line, budget, message and target audience. Using the research results, IDRA and an advisory committee for the project outlined the goals for the campaign. After determining the specific goals and strategies, etc., we carefully crafted the message. We selected target audiences that include the general public and underserved populations.

Communicating – doing what was planned. Outreach campaigns involve various forms of communicating such as public service announcements, editorial articles, posters, fliers, mailouts, telephone hotlines, special events, generating news coverage and community building. For this project, creation of the message and prototype materials represents the first year of the project. The second year of the project (which is currently pending funding) will involve implementation of the campaign with media throughout the state.

Evaluating – what worked, what did not work, what would be done differently, what has been learned. As IDRA implements the campaign, we will test market the materials and evaluate their effectiveness.

The Power of the Message

Using the outreach guide, literacy center staff, advisors and volunteers are following these four steps to tailor their outreach efforts to best meet the needs of their own communities.

In some communities, encouraging people to sign up for literacy and English as a second language classes has not been difficult. Literacy projects in these communities often have long waiting lists for their classes. What they need first are teachers, volunteers and resources to enable them to expand their services. They need something bigger and longer lasting.

Given this reality, IDRA's prototype outreach campaign is designed to increase the number of literate adults by setting activities that will lead to a concerted community will around literacy and will carry on and multiply the campaign's outcomes. The project's vision is that, as more and more people are touched by their involvement in literacy efforts – either as participants in literacy programs or as volunteers – they will share their stories with others and will invite others to become involved. As excitement grows, the campaign should take on a life of its own, and the community will accept responsibility to achieve universal literacy.

This illustrates the first rule of developing an outreach campaign: create a vision of what will result. Doing so will change the planned activities from simply giving out information to communicating in ways that encourage support and action.

Advertisers and the entertainment industry have been doing this for years. For example, a hamburger chain may want to communicate that its burgers are better or less fattening or cheaper, but what it *really* wants is for people to buy its burgers. So, the chain will give out all the information it thinks people want in order for them to choose its burgers over someone else's.

The same trend that has caused information demand has also caused a bombardment of information – information overload. "Soon people will have to be treated for *encyclophobia* – the fear of being trapped in an electronic encyclopedia," write public relations experts Jack Trout and Steve Rivkin (1995). A German researcher found that within 24 hours, people forget up to 80 percent of what they thought they had learned (Trout and Rivkin, 1995). People forget because there is so much to remember.

With all this information demand and availability, there is intense competition for our eyes and ears. In one of my college advertising classes, I learned that the first order of business is to grab attention:

> Although politeness is generally considered a virtue, it really has no place in a television commercial. People go to television to be entertained, not to see commercials. Therefore, the commercial must break through their relaxation and get their attention. If radio must intrude, television commercials must interrupt. They must break through the wall of interest in the program content and literally call attention to the product or message (Schultz, 1984).

Thus, we are bombarded each day by hundreds of media messages – some welcome, some not. These messages usually are trying to get us to buy things or to "buy" ideas. But, in addition to – and in some cases more than – the messages that say "buy this" or "watch this," audiences are remembering the messages that say: "The thinner you are the better," "Girls should be sexy and boys should be tough," "The good guy always

Adult Literacy Outreach *- continued on page 9*

Keeping the Faith: Valuing Parents

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

Valuing as an Article of Faith

The valuing paradigm has been part of IDRA's philosophy since its inception. The term "valuing" is a somewhat-clunky-but-useful antonym to "deficit" as used, for example, in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. The word expresses a paradigm of unlimited high regard for children and adults. Valuing assumes tremendous potential. Applied to adults it means: Parents want the best for their children in education, career choices and future economic security. They want happiness and tranquility. They want to be viewed as capable and intelligent, regardless of background, educational experience and economic status. Most parents will do what is best for their children, if at all possible, if given the information they need and if treated with dignity and worth.

A teacher with high expectations for all her students will not despair if some of the children fail to meet the expected standards. She will not lose her unlimited high regard because some are less than good students. Likewise, a person working with parents will not lose the fundamental valuing because parents do not show up at a meeting or do not follow up on some agreed-upon task.

Valuing does not assume or expect perfection. The reality is that there are hurt and disturbed people who are not acting in their own or their children's best interests. But that is dealt with as it is experienced and observed. These assumptions are not new or foreign, but the point to be made is that we can encounter teachers and educators within our own ranks who unwittingly act out of negative assumptions when relating to the adult population of speakers of languages other than English. We might have some choir members agreeing with this sermon but acting in contradictory ways. The following are cases in point: a media campaign, a teacher's conference and a speech.

A Media Campaign: Mixed up on the Message – Dangling Danger vs. Accentuating the Positive

During the past 12 months, this point of view has been tested in two different programs that directly affect parents, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, minority or speak a language other than English. One IDRA program, *Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations*, was funded by the Texas Education Agency to create an awareness throughout Texas on the urgent need for state-wide literacy. The IDRA organizational mission to create schools that work for all children encompasses encouraging the literacy of the parents, knowing how directly it affects the literacy of the children. In conducting research and then developing video scripts we surveyed literacy centers, consulted with a statewide advisory committee and contracted with a firm that had a positive history of working with non-profit and minority organizations to develop audio and video products (see article on Page 1).

We encountered opinions, in all quarters, that supported using messages that would grab the viewer's attention through shock and fear. We were faced with the contradictions of a valuing vs. a deficit point of view, the latter being perceived as a necessary hook to get the general public's attention. It was particularly difficult to reconcile the negative opinions because they were rooted in people's perceptions about effective media campaigns. A prevailing notion from some advisors, interviewees and even the media production agency was that, for the message to be noticed and heard and to have impact, the problem had to be laid out in dramatic and negative terms; that is, the targeted persons had to be portrayed as a threat, a disease or a deficit by being illiterate. Some people who would almost vilify the illiterate adult are themselves very dedicated professionals who agree with our valuing model towards adults.

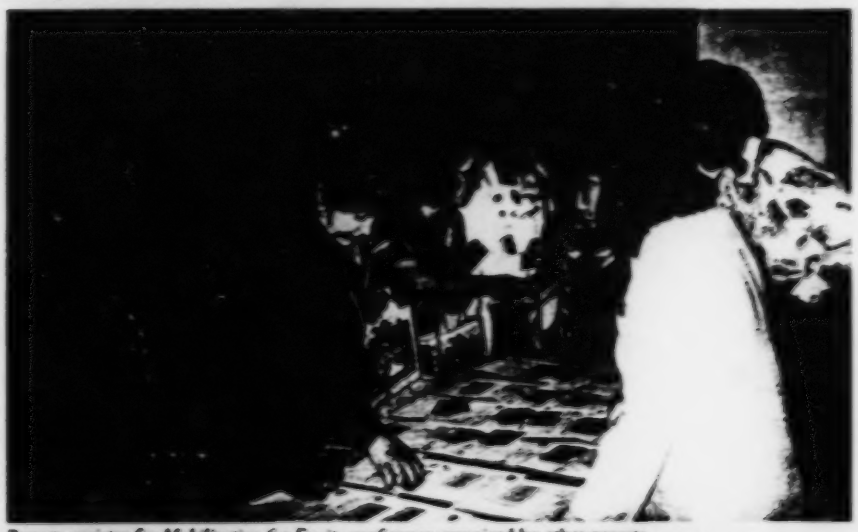
Our stand was and continues to be that the message cannot prejudice the public against the population we wish to serve.

Our stand was and continues to be that the message cannot prejudice the public against the population we wish to serve. We ultimately produced materials that meet with our positive philosophy and also work as effective media messages. It was instructive once more to see that creating materials that give dignity, worth and positive value to persons depicted in media is not an easy task. Watchfulness and persistence are required. The choir to whom we think we are sermonizing might not be totally of the same faith, as is highlighted in the next example.

A Teacher's Conference: Parents as Allies or Threats?

Picture this context: A group of bilingual parents are presenting to a group of bilingual educators about a bilingual education conference for parents by parents. The parents, as part of their leadership training, are describing the planning process and inviting the audience to attend. The participants, about 30 or more, are mostly teach-

Keeping the Faith - continued on page 4



Parents register for *Mobilization for Equity* conference organized by other parents.

Keeping the Faith - continued from page 3

ers. The parents are understandably nervous when the session begins. They present their rationale for an educational conference for parents by parents and are taking turns reviewing the topics and planning process.

In this true-story occasion, two of the participants took issue when they heard the list of topics for the conference. One teacher told the parents that teachers have a difficult time, too. Another administrator was seriously bothered that there were topics on the agenda that seemed to be critical of the schools and some teachers. He asked, "What is this program for, anyway?" The defensive tone of these responses suddenly created an adversarial tension in the room. Several members of the audience jumped to the parents' defense. One teacher responded that it was high time that parents were organizing themselves and learning about more aggressive advocacy for their children. The audience was overwhelmingly on the parents' side.

Yet, the incident reveals that some people will go along with a positive view of parents only as long as it stays within certain bounds and sticks to particular topics. The parents who were presenting, trembling and drenched in nervous perspiration, were just trying out their fledgling wings in saying that things are less than perfect in their children's schools. They had experienced excessive reactions from some teachers and principals when they had gone to discuss problems their children were having in school. This spurred them to have some of those same issues discussed at their conference. These parents and teachers are not inherently antagonists. The whole community needs to join in the efforts to create excellent schools.

Yet it was still difficult for those two bilingual educators to empathize with these parents. They felt threatened and attacked. The unlimited high regard can go out the window when we feel our institutional or professional allegiance challenged.

A Speech: Responsibility Good – Guilt Bad

Of greater concern was a major speaker who made a charming, engaging, humorous and bilingual presentation. He received a strong ovation from the audience of mostly bilingual and working class families. His message was that parents are ultimately responsible for their children and if the children go bad, it is the parents' fault. The speaker's use of "guilt" as a means to increase parent commitment to their children was textbook deficit model thinking. Encouragement and support of parent leadership is more apt to be nurtured by acknowledgment of parent efforts, strengths and achievements in the face of difficult economic and social conditions. It is an easy and cheap shot to make parents feel guilty about their irresponsibility toward their children. It is the common attack of schools with bad faith toward families; many times it is used as a smoke screen to deflect attention away from the schools' being held accountable for the instruction that goes on in classes during the school day.

Valuable Lessons Learned: Be Vigilant

The parent committee that planned and managed the parent conference has been meeting this summer to evaluate the events. At one meeting, I chose to give my reaction to the speech mentioned above. It was a surprise to most of them. As I had expected, most of them thought it was a good speech and had not analyzed it for its content. After I gave my explanation, one parent leader said that she had initially disagreed with my analysis when I began talking, but as I explained it carefully she came around to my point of view. As leadership training, it was an important moment. The contrast of the two points of view, valuing and deficit, was clear to all of the committee members. They now understood more clearly how pernicious and prevalent is the self- and peer criticism among parents. It was a serendipitous and appropriate learning "Ah ha!" – another success in the nurturance of parent leadership that is compassionate to other parents.

We must continue to support and strengthen our families, validate and weave our families into the marvelous fabric (*rebozo* and multicolored *mantilla*) that this country always has been and continues to be. We must be constantly vigilant of what messages we send to parents, and what unwitting but nevertheless influential feelings and attitudes we project toward our families,

Keeping the Faith - continued on page 12

Mobilization for Equity Highlights

Linda Ocasio

Writer Linda Ocasio was asked by the Ford Foundation to attend the Mobilization for Equity (MFE) parent conference in San Antonio. The Ford Foundation has provided funds through the National Coalition of Advocates for Students to IDRA and others for this national MFE effort (see stories on pp. 3 and 6). Below are highlights of her observations.

The parent conference was in full swing at Palo Alto College in San Antonio, after a morning of coffee, donuts and introductions in the auditorium. Then some 80 parents dispersed to various classrooms for workshops. In one room, Margarita James discussed parent-teacher communication and how parents can take an active role in their child's education. In another room, Clementina Padilla talked about the importance of love in the family. James and Padilla are part of a larger planning committee of 30 parents who organized the conference over five months, from the smallest details to the largest.

IDRA's Aurelio Montemayor reminded the parents that the conference was a means to an end – more parent involvement in the new organization – not an end in itself. "It's all a preamble to the real training," Montemayor said. "After the conference, we'll discuss what gets in the way of our organizing our community. I'm pushing hard for a critical analysis of what leadership is." He spent months prior to the conference meeting with the core committee, and was by turns cajoling and stern, his conversation flowing back and forth between Spanish and English. Montemayor was able to draw on the synergy of other organizing and training efforts going on in San Antonio. The conference was sponsored by IDRA, the local chapter of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) and *Avance*, another family training organization.

"Aurelio and I are both trainers, so it just evolved into a natural process," said Lucy Acosta, director of MALDEF's parent leadership program in San Antonio. "It's coming together as a group, a team-building process that parents usually don't get to be a part of. Other parent conferences are decided by a group of professionals and educators. This is parents saying what they want."

Two-Way Bilingual Education: A Positive Way to "Cry Woof"

Frank Gonzales, Ph.D.

One day, Mother Mouse was crossing the street with her three little children. She got about halfway across the road when she spotted a cat, crouched and ready to pounce upon them. The cat and Mother Mouse eyeballed each other for two to three minutes. Finally, Mother Mouse opened her mouth and let out an enormous "Woof." The cat quickly scurried away to avoid this "unseen" dog. Mother Mouse turned to her three little ones and said, "Now, do you see the advantage of a second language?" (author unknown).

This is an example of what being bilingual can do for all the "mice" of this world. In a global society, being bilingual can literally save your life. Having more than one set of language skills gives a person a competitive edge when seeking employment or interacting in the global market. Being able to interact in a multicultural society enriches one's life with purpose and meaning. This article discusses two-way bilingual programs and the value of maintaining or developing more than one language.

Transitional Bilingual Programs

Bilingual education programs for non-English speakers have been in operation in the United States for three decades. The *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court decision in 1973 guaranteed non-English speaking students equal access to education through the *Lau* remedies, one of which was bilingual education, for school districts. Districts responded by providing transitional bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) programs.

Transitional bilingual programs view students who have another language as a "problem." The perceived solution is to transition them into English as soon as possible. This transition period is usually three years or less. Students are taught subject matter in their native language while they are learning English. Emphasis is on transitioning into English, not maintaining the native language. When the child has learned enough English, he or she is mainstreamed into the regular classroom, and native language instruction is stopped.

Transitional bilingual programs can place students at risk when the transition process interrupts the acquisition of academic language development process that requires five to seven years (Cummins, 1981). Little emphasis is placed on valuing the native language and culture; consequently, the child's self-concept is undermined. This hurry-up approach provides too little a foundation on which to build academic success for most limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. This type of instruction is compensatory in nature and reinforces the attitude that students are not good enough the way they are.

Two-Way Bilingual Programs

Another type of bilingual program, two-way bilingual education, has taken root in many schools throughout the United States. Two-way bilingual education is also known as *bilingual immersion, two-way immersion, dual language instruction* and *developmental bilingual education*. In these programs, students receive instruction in English and another language in a classroom that is usually one-half native speakers of English and one-half native speakers of the target language (Sosa, 1993). All students develop proficiency in both languages. The most common targeted language is Spanish, however some two-way programs support learning through Japanese, Korean, Cantonese, Russian, Portuguese, French and Navajo (Collier, 1994).

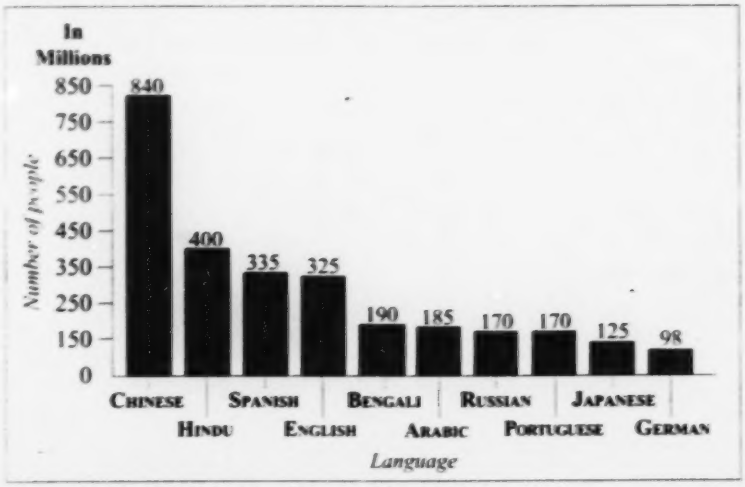
Two-way bilingual programs develop social and academic language. The LEP student benefits from the opportunity to learn through his or her native language as well as through English (Krashen, 1991; Sosa, 1993). Native English speakers acquire a second language as they are taught academic content in an immersion environment (Genesee, 1987; Harley, et al., 1990).

All students add another language and culture. This additive environment also enhances students' self-esteem and allows for cross-cultural understanding (Christian, 1994). The goal of two-way bilingual programs is to create fully bilingual individuals whether they be White, Black, Hispanic, Asian American or Native American.

Two-way bilingual programs can present the two languages in a number of ways. The two languages may be allocated by *content* (e.g., social studies and mathematics are taught in Spanish while

Two-Way Bilingual - continued on page 8

Top Ten Languages Spoken in the World



Source: *20/20*, ABC Television Network, May 14,1995

Familias Unidas para Educación
Families United for Education
A Voice for Our Future
Una Voz para Nuestro Futuro

FAMILIES UNITED FOR EDUCATION... CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS AND FRIENDS

Through IDRA's role in the national Mobilization for Equity *project funded by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students and the Ford Foundation, an informal network of families planned and conducted an educational conference for parents by parents last May. The families have continued to meet this summer and are preparing for a second conference this fall (October 26, San Antonio College). Below are some comments by participants about what has been learned in this leadership development process.*

Clementina Padilla, with 28 grandchildren, part of the central organizing committee and a conference presenter, shared in her beautiful and assertive Spanish:

"Para mi ha sido una oportunidad muy bonita de desenvolverme como lider. Me encanta eso porque tal vez ya lo trae uno dentro de si. Luego aqui lo he podido desarrollar. Ser un lider para mi es servir a la comunidad. Ser un lider no es estar en la punta de una organización. Es compartir con la comunidad.

"En este proceso hay una diversidad de liderazgo aqui entre nosotras y que bonito...unos en politica, otros en lo que es la educación, en inmigración, y por ejemplo mi liderazgo es en la familia – para mi es muy importante la familia. Mi familia es la familia de todos.

"Lo que más he notado en este proceso es la confianza que nos han tenido. Nos han hecho sentir importantes. Nos han dejado que nos vayamos desenvolviendo con nuestras propias agallas de lider, aqui han hecho que crescamos como lider. Yo conribui en una manera muy especial; todo enfocado en la familia. Hay muchas familias muy disfuncionales y esta fue una oportunidad de acercarme a muchas familias. Fui conferencista, asisti a todas las juntas y participe en las deliberaciones y gracias por darnos esa participación."

["For me, this has been a beautiful opportunity to develop as a leader. But, I love that because perhaps one already has that inside. To me, being a leader is serving the community. Being a leader is not being at the head of an organization but rather sharing with the community.

"In this process there is a diversity of leadership among us, and that is beautiful. Some are in politics, some in education, others in immigration – and, for example, my leadership is with the family. The family is very important to me. My family is all families.

"What I have noted the most in this process is the trust you have given us. You have made us feel important. You have let us develop, with our own gutsy ideas of what leadership is, you have made us grow as leaders. I contributed in a very special way with my focus on the family. There are many dysfunctional families and this was an opportunity to get closer to many families. I was a presenter. I attended all the planning meetings. I participated in all the deliberations and thank you for allowing me to participate."]

Her colleagues around the table agreed that Clementina has much to teach many of us, even though we may hold a more formal education and strings of degrees.

Sylvia Rodriquez and **Angelica Portillo**, parents with several children in public schools, some of whom have special needs, chimed in with what they have learned in the process.

"I have more confidence…I realize that others have the same problems I do…United we are stronger…We can help more parents…and we feel better about ourselves.

"Ahora me gusta relacionarme con más gente y antes tenia miedo [Now I love to relate to others, and before I was afraid].

"We have learned that to be a leader we must be able to listen, and to share – to not be afraid to stand up for our rights; to help kids, ourselves and others; and to become united.

"Enseñarles a otros padres que hay que enfrentar los problemas, y a donde recurrir. Ayudar a los niños y a otros que no saben como [Teaching other parents that we have to confront problems and where there is help. Helping the children and others who don't know how].

"We have learned the proper way of doing things. Along the way our self-esteem is growing. Sometimes schools see us as troublemakers because we know too much. We have learned how to speak up, not to be walked on and how to go up the chain of command. We just want to be treated with respect.

"Vamos a tener exito. We will succeed. We can open the eyes of other parents and remove their fear."

***Families United** - continued on page 7*

Families United - continued from page 6

I also spoke with two women I worked with to host the family meetings and conference. **Lucy Acosta** [LA], director of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) parent leadership training program, is a courageous leader, parent and sensitive ally to emerging parent leaders. **Kimberly Jones** [KJ], director of the Columbia Heights Language and Leadership Development Center in San Antonio, provided support, resources and meeting space. Her bright eyes light up in the presence of emerging grass roots leadership.

KJ: "What is important about this process is that it is left in the parents' hands to go through the process, through trial and error and minimal intrusion with expertise. They continue to bring their talents to the table and develop their strong leadership skills."

LA: "In this empowerment process, the parents are basically gaining confidence. Their increase in self-esteem is helping them participate in this process, and they are carrying that on to other aspects of their lives…their interactions with school personnel, even their interpersonal relationships. I have seen them blossom in terms of where I saw them at the beginning of this process and where they are now. There's been tremendous growth."

I asked them: "We're using the planning and carrying out of a conference as a lab for parent leadership development. What are your measures of success for this effort?"

LA: "I measure the success in these parent conferences by the issues they are grappling with. For example, three years ago, just getting them to become involved in their children's education was the big goal. Now they are basically choosing and prioritizing issues that affect them strongly. When you see the gap of where they started three years ago and where they are now…I think every year it is going to escalate. Where a parent might have started out concerned about how to help her child get a better grade or how to have better teacher conferences, they are now grappling with issues affecting the entire country. They are talking about immigration, welfare reform and the quality of education. They have gotten extremely sophisticated in a very short time. Very knowledgeable."

KJ: "I would tell campus principals what a wonderful opportunity this is. If they haven't cultivated leadership within their own school, this is how you do it. Superintendents, principals and counselors in the schools in my area of town all want greater parent involvement and this is an excellent opportunity for them to get parents involved. I would point out the presentation skills these parents have developed."

LA: "I would also remind them about the state and federal regulations that require parent participation under Texas' Senate Bill 1 in site based decision making. It's very scary for principals to work with a group of parents who have been trained by someone else because there's still the trust factor – they're not sure whether it's going to be a help to them or whether it's going to be a headache."

Dr. Aurelia Davila de Silva, college professor, researcher in how children become biliterate and presenter at the parent conference who also brought with her a child, her husband and her parents. She is a parent activist who came to this meeting after a meeting with her own child's teachers and is a founding member of this parent group. She shared the following:

"The benefits of this parent leadership process are many. The main one is that we are a group of parents networking together and trying to do what is best for kids. I think that through this networking there are a lot of good things that have happened. We know more about resources, people, agencies and the many things around us.

"My definition of leadership is any time a parent has tools to go in and get something accomplished for her own children or to help other parents go into a school and help another parent or children with whatever needs to get done…and there are certainly many things that need to get done. I have noticed leadership emerging as, in our meeting today, I hear the case histories that are coming up from each parent. They are able to articulate their own history, the history of their own children, the history of what they did and can do and what can be done. I don't see leadership as being in front of thousands of people, or 50 or 30 but it's a one-to-one contact, it's being able to touch the lives of many other parents of other children…throughout a period of time.

"I have been extremely dissatisfied with my local PTA because it is controlled by a small group of people. In contrast, in our leadership process we have had parents of different socio-economic levels and from different ethnic groups. My PTA experience is that parliamentary procedures are used to quiet people. We need another way to empower parents. Now that we have this process going we need to open up even more because we will find similar case histories as we form alliances with parents from other groups. This is a wonderful way of meeting other parents that are going through the same thing I am."

Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., is the lead trainer in the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

Did you know?

More people are seeking literacy and English as a second language classes than served by local centers:

- **During the 1994 school year, 5,000 immigrants in Washington, D.C., were turned away from English classes.**
- **The city of Los Angeles has a waiting list of about 50,000 people for classes in English.**
- **The state of New York has resorted to a lottery to select from the large number of individuals who wish to learn English.**

Source: House Judiciary Committee Report for H.R. 351, Bilingual Voting Requirements Repeal Act of 1996, Report 104-728, July 31, 1996

Two-Way Bilingual - continued from page 5

science and the arts are taught in English); by *teacher* (e.g., one teacher uses only Cantonese and another teacher uses only English); or by *day* (e.g., instruction is given in a certain language on alternate days) (Gonzales, 1995).

Two-way bilingual programs also allow for different language development models. In the *"50/50" model*, students receive instruction for equal amounts of time in each language. In the *"90/10" model*, 90 percent of the instruction is in the target language, 10 percent is in English during the early grades, and instruction gradually moves toward "50/50" in the upper grades. Some programs never separate the students by language group, while others provide specific second language instruction to separate language groups every day.

The curriculum in two-way bilingual programs is content-based with a focus on developing strong academic achievement in both languages. Teachers most often use thematic units, experimental or hands-on activities, peer interaction or cooperative learning, whole language approaches (e.g., from the whole to the parts) and second language strategies (e.g., graphic organizers, visuals and realia, discussions) (Gonzales, 1994).

Two-way bilingual programs are effective in teaching two languages to different groups of students and in developing academic competence in all of the students. Kathryn J. Lindholm and Kathryn Gavlek found that student achievement on several standardized tests demonstrated academic progress as well as fluency in both languages (1994). Virginia Collier found that Hispanic students in five urban districts with two-way programs experienced more long-term educational gains than did students in other bilingual or ESL programs (1994). Donna Christian points out that cross-cultural interaction in two-way programs enhances the acquisition of the second language and builds a mutual respect among the students (1994).

All currently established two-way bilingual programs in the United States are at the elementary level and engage students for only four to six years. There is no continued development of bilingualism into the secondary level. This is tragic because the competition these students will face in our global society will require bilingual or multilingual skills. Contrary to U.S. belief, not everyone speaks English on this globe. English ranks fourth among the top 10 languages spoken on earth (see box on Page 5).

If our schools really want our students to be able "cry woof" when they need to, we must value the linguistic diversity that students bring to the school and enhance the **students' native language, teach them English as a second language, and encourage them to learn three, four or five languages.**

Resources

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Harley, B., and P. Allen, J. Cummins, M. Swain (Eds). *The Development of Second Language Proficiency.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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Frank Gonzales, Ph.D., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

Call for Papers

National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies
National Conference

February 11-15, 1997
Houston, Texas

Abstracts, not to exceed two pages, can be submitted relating to any aspect of the Hispanic and Latino experience. Subjects may include (but are not limited to) literature, demographics, history, politics, economics, education and health care. Individual papers must be presented in no more than 25 minutes. Deadline for abstracts: December 5, 1996. Send abstracts to: Dr. Lemuel Berry, Jr., Executive Director, NAHLS; Morehead State University; 212 Rader Hall; Morehead, Ken. 40351-1689; 606/783-2650; Fax: 606/783-5046.

Adult Literacy Outreach - continued from page 2

wins," and "Violence is the only solution."

News programs and television producers determine what stories they will tell based on what is *unusual*. Viewers interpret the news as being *usual*. So, when media coverage focuses graphically on crime, for instance, people naturally continue to worry about random crime. People's perceptions are influenced even though the facts show that most crime rates are dropping and most crimes are not random (Prothrow-Stith, 1991).

Researchers are studying the effects of such messages. Exhaustive reviews of the evidence, accumulated for more than 40 years in more than 3000 studies, have lead researchers to conclude that the mass media significantly effects behaviors, perceptions and attitudes of many children, adolescents and adults (MediaScope, 1993).

Words and media images are very powerful. Sometimes it is easy to believe that no one message will – by itself – have such an impact. But, if this is true, why communicate at all?

Choosing Messages of Value

Outreach messages for literacy must be determined carefully. When they convey information and images that people feel connected to and when they encourage action, the effects can be both powerful and positive.

In working through the four steps listed above, decisions must be made. In the hurry of deadlines and juggling various responsibilities, the easy answers can look attractive. While developing its campaign prototype for literacy, IDRA faced this. Some people we talked to suggested that the only way to get someone's attention is to focus on how bad illiteracy is for everyone else and to categorize people who cannot read as "lost" and needing "rescue."

In our analysis of a sampling of past literacy outreach campaigns and their messages, 19 percent contained "deficit" model messages, and only 13 percent contained clearly "valuing" messages.

The deficit model assumes that there is something wrong with a person who cannot read well and that literacy projects exist to fix the problem (Robledo Montecel, et al., 1993). The deficit way of thinking will codify a person as, in this case, an "illiterate." It uses the word "illiterate" as a noun instead of an adjective as if being illiterate is the sum total of that person's identity. Deficit-based outreach messages will attempt to appeal to people's guilt to generate action, or they will use economics to describe "illiterates" as a "drain" on society.

The IDRA Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations public service announcements tell a story of "Elena," shown here reading with her children.

Paul Ilsley and Norman Stahl have studied literacy outreach efforts and have outlined four common deficit metaphors and their effects: "Unfortunately illiteracy is often discussed in relation to such striking notions as war, disease, prison and chronic unemployment both in print media and electronic media campaigns," (1993). Designed to invoke strong connotations in the public's collective mind, these metaphors portray illiteracy as a function of school language, as a disease, as a national enemy in the military sense, and as a lack of capital in a cultural banking system (see box on Page 10).

Some people argue that such metaphors are used because they are effective. But, the fact is, while messages that focus on the negative costs of illiteracy to the community, to business and to taxpayers are easy messages to communicate, any positive reactions that result from such messages have been shown to be short-lived. IDRA's goal is to create community support for literacy efforts – real support, lasting support.

Others argue that such metaphors are the only choices out there. They have become so accustomed to deficit model messages – whether associated with literacy, lawbreakers or lipstick – that they cannot see any alternatives.

Even when the intentions are good, the means do not justify the ends. The concerns raised by Ilsley and Stahl are similar to concerns raised by IDRA in its work in education. IDRA has known there are alternatives because it has demonstrated them from its inception. Its vision is to work with people to "make schools work for all children" not "make children work for all schools."

In IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, the stated and underlying philosophy is that *all children are valuable, none is expendable*. The program works with students that schools were about to give up on. It helps the schools and families see the youths from another perspective – as tutors, as capable of contributing, as valuable.

In a climate that says parents who do not attend school meetings obviously do not care about their children's education, IDRA chooses an alternative. IDRA works with parents and schools to see each other differently and to work with each other differently in ways that value both.

This alternative to the deficit model is the "valuing" model. In literacy programs, the valuing model takes the goal, "We serve people who cannot read well," and emphasizes the first three words, "We serve people." It says adult learners bring life experience, skills and their own strengths.

In literacy outreach, the valuing model asks questions of its message like:

- Does the message validate diverse populations?
- Are stereotypes avoided and individuals portrayed with dignity and self-worth?
- Can the underserved groups identify positively with the portrayals and the message?
- Is the message one of hope and possibility?
- Is the message one that supports the inherent dignity of people who happen to be illiterate?

Adult Literacy Outreach - continued on page 10

Messages to Avoid in Literacy Outreach

School metaphor

- Uses school language and measures (grade levels, tests), uses same standards for adults as for children, assumes participants are naive and do not know what they want.
- When the school language that failed them in the past appears to be, once again, unrealistic or rigid, adult nonreaders will avoid them.

Medical (and industrial) metaphor

- Considers illiteracy to be a "disease" and literacy centers to be "clinics."
- Promotes the image that there is scientific precision in teaching adult literacy.
- Implies that people are diseased and that illiterates are contagious and are to be shunned or feared.
- "There is a difference between curing a disease and promoting health. A premise behind the idea of eradicating illiteracy, as if it is a disease, is that a deficit model is appropriate," (Ilsley and Stahl, 1993).

Military metaphor

- Declares "war on illiteracy" to mobilize legions of volunteers in a campaign to hit the target populations.
- Promotes short-term action instead of long-term solutions.
- Based on deficit model – illiterates are the enemy.
- "When a person decides to become involved in the 'war on illiteracy,' he or she must be concerned with the possibility of becoming another of the casualties who fall by the tutorial wayside," (Ilsley and Stahl, 1993).

Banking metaphor

- Assumes knowledge is stored in vaults from which withdrawals and deposits can be made.
- Positions teachers as "keepers of the official knowledge, as opposed to facilitators of the critical thinking skills that will empower others," (Ilsley and Stahl, 1993).

Messages to Include in Literacy Outreach

All people are valuable

- Adult learners come with talents and experience.
- All adults are capable of becoming more literate.

Literacy involvement brings opportunities

- For learners: job advancement, education, independence, strengthened self esteem.
- For volunteers and staff: community involvement, enhanced skills, strengthened self esteem.
- For businesses: community involvement, more skilled workforce.

Our community can increase literacy

- By working together the community can accomplish more.
- Literacy brings economic stability and is a worthwhile investment.
- We know what needs to be done

Ilsley, Paul and Norman Stahl. "Reconceptualizing the Language of Adult Literacy," *Journal of Reading* (Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, September 1993).

Source: *Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations. Outreach Guide.* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1996).

Adult Literacy Outreach - continued from page 9

The materials created by IDRA are designed to portray literacy initiatives as investments. The message starts and ends with the concept of valuing all individuals. It communicates a picture of the better life as a result of involvement at any level – business, volunteer, service provider, client. In each television PSA, radio announcement, newspaper advertisement and flier, one key phrase is used: Do it... Support it... Reading. Because it means so much [*Lee, hazlo. Apoyalo. Porque significa tanto*].

Rather than highlighting, for example, the external bad things that will happen if audience members do not do something, this campaign designed by IDRA encourages individuals by appealing to more inward motivations. The campaign focuses on the benefits of literacy, such as job preparedness in a high-tech workplace. Through supplementary materials, it provides specific information and strategies on encouraging literacy through implementation of workplace and community education and training programs. It shows successes. It gives ideas. It points to tools and resources.

Conducting an outreach campaign does not have to be difficult, but it does involve planning and making choices. Audiences are making choices too. They are deciding what they will learn and how they will learn it. Their choices are based on what is valuable to them. Ours should be too.

Resources

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Schultz, Don and Dennis Martin, William Brown. *Strategic Advertising Campaigns.* (Lincolnwood, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1984) pg. 291.

Trout, Jack and Steve Rivkin. "Keep it Simple, Strategist," *The Public Relations Strategist* (New York, N.Y.: Public Relations Society of America, Fall 1995) pp. 41-46.

For more information about the IDRA Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations project contact

Adult Literacy Outreach - continued on page 12

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IDRA Publications Available

Hispanic Families As Valued Partners: An Educator's Guide

by Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., Aurora Gallagher, Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., Ninta Adame-Reyna, M.S. and Josie D. Supik, M.A.

This publication explores the role of Hispanic families, particularly parents, in U.S. education. Through a presentation of facts about Hispanics in the United States and an honest discussion of Hispanic cultural values and mores, the authors dispel the myths that many educators have about their Hispanic students' families. Most importantly, the book focuses on the common ground shared by schools and Hispanic homes – most notably that education is important. It seeks to show administrators and teachers the value of family participation in education. Instructions and worksheets for implementing a parental involvement program tailored to the needs of Hispanic families and a comprehensive resources list are also provided. (90 Pages; 1993; $19.95)

The State of Literacy in San Antonio in the 1990s

by Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., Josie D. Supik, M.A., Felix Montes, Ph.D. and Ninta Adame-Reyna, M.A.

This publication reports facts about illiteracy in San Antonio by council district, race and ethnicity. It answers the questions of whether or not there is a connection between literacy and income level or the ability to speak English. It also includes recommendations for solutions to the problem. (24 Pages plus color maps; 1994; $10)

Available from IDRA at 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190; 210/684-8180; fax 210/684-5389; E-mail: cgoodman@txdirect.net.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In June and July, IDRA worked with **5,209** teachers, administrators and parents through **72** training and technical assistance activities and **72** program sites in **ten** states. Topics included:

- *Engineering, Science and Math Increases Job Aspirations* Summer Institute
- Evaluation of Desegregation Efforts
- The Effect of Retention
- *La Caja de Cuentos*
- Technology Training
- *Starting Today...Steps to Success for Beginning Bilingual Educators*

Participating agencies and school districts include:

- Southside ISD, San Antonio
- Louisiana Department of Education
- Garland ISD
- Edgewood ISD, San Antonio
- Inner City Games, San Antonio

IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision-makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula.

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.

***Keeping the Faith**- continued from page 4*

especially those who do not fit the middle-class, English-speaking mold. Our media messages about our families, our relationships to assertive parents, our speeches to them should support their liberation from institutionalized prejudices and economic disadvantage. We must reiterate in word and in deed that the parents of our (hopefully) bilingual children are valuable and worthy of praise…that we welcome their aggressive leadership to create excellent schools for all children.

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., is the lead trainer in the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

***Adult Literacy Outreach** - continued from page 10*

Aurelio Montemayor or Christie Goodman at 210/684-8180.

Christie Goodman, APR, is IDRA's Communications Manager.

Coming Up!

In October, the
IDRA Newsletter
focuses on staying in school.

Student Financial Assistance Package

Through a project funded by the Southwestern Bell Foundation, IDRA has demonstrated the usefulness of using the computer to help students get financial assistance to attend college. The IDRA Financial Assistance Package is a combined software and personal assistance plan that allows schools to effectively provide counseling to students who need assistance going to college. The system uses a comprehensive data base that includes information on hundreds of institutions that offer assistance to students wanting to attend college all over the country. The data base also includes information about most universities and thousands of colleges. Information includes the level of financial assistance the colleges offer, criteria, addresses, phone numbers and other important data.

The IDRA Student Financial Assistance package includes:

- Installation of the system at the school,
- Training of counselors and other staff in the use of the system,
- Monitoring and evaluating the system implementation, and
- Reporting on the activities and results of implementing the system as needed.

The system can be installed in any IBM-compatible computer with about four Megabytes of memory and 20 Megabytes of free hard disk space. IDRA installs the system for schools and condition the computers so that they work efficiently.

For more information, E-mail to IDRA research associate, Dr. Felix Montes (fmontes@txdirect.net) or call him at 210/684-8180.

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
IDRA

5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190

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